

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
SSM-03 IO-13 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ARA-10 DOE-15
SOE-02 AID-05 HA-05 /131 W
-----008380 281312Z /41/14

R 280841Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4845
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 2519

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 4)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, YE,KYS, CU
SUBJ: WHAT TO DO ABOUT SOUTH YEMEN?

REF: SANA 0102

BEGIN SUMMARY: YAR MINISTER BASINDWA CALLS FOR QL
MEETING OF PENINSULAR STATES TO DEVISE STRATEGY OF
CONTAINMENT FOR SOUTH YEMEN. END SUMMARY.

1. AT DINNER ON MAY 26 YAR MINISTER OF STATE MOHAMMAD
SALEM BASINDWA, IN LONG TALK WITH CHARGE AND EMBOFF
NGLEHART, NOTED HIS RISING CONCERN WITH CUBANS IN
SOUTH YEMEN. HE SUGGESTED THERE MIGHT BE 7,000
CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL THERE. WE SAID WE THOUGHT
NUMBER MIGHT BE OVER ONE THOUSAND, BUT NOT MUCH OVER
IT. BASINDWA DIDN'T PRESS POINT, AND CLEARLY SEEMED
UNCERTAIN ABOUT HIS SOURCES. HE WAS STILL CONVINCED
OF THREAT TO YAR FROM SOUTH, HOWEVER.

2. BASINDWA WAS SINGING VERY DIFFERENT TUNE THAN
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IN JANUARY WHEN (SEE REFTTEL) HE OUTLINED SCENARIO TO
TOPPLE PDRY IN 1978 BY ARMED INTERVENTION. HE STILL
LAMENTED LACK OF "OFFENSIVE STRATEGY" TOWARD PDRY
AND SAID REPEATEDLY THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR PENINSU-
LAR STATES TO MEET IN SUMMIT TO DEVISE COORDINATED
STRATEGY, BUT EMPHASIS NOW, IN VIEW OF INCREASED
CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN SOUTH YEMEN AND ON

ETHIOPIANS SUCCESSES IN OGADEN, IS ON CONTAINING SOUTH YEMEN, NOT ATTACKING IT.

3. BASINDWA SUGGESTED THAT YAR COULD NOT DO MUCH REALLY TO BRING SUCH A CONFERENCE ABOUT. THE SAUDIS HAD TO DO THIS. BASINDWA SUGGESTED THAT USG MIGHT URGE THEM TO DO SO BUT DCM SAID FVHAT WAS ROLE FOR REGIONAL STATES, NOT OUTSIDER, AND PRESSED BASINDWA FOR HIS IDS ON PROPER STRATEGY THAT MIGHT BE ADOPTED AT SUCH A MEETING OF PENINSULAR STATES. CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT YAR KEEPS ADEN REFINERDIN OPERATION WITH PURCHASE OF GASOLINE AND NIUPPLIES NVXT OF ACTIVITY IN ADEN PORT BY ITS TRANSIT TRADE. OTHER TRADE WITH SOUTH YEMEN WAS NOT NEGLIGIBLE, HE SAID, AND SUPPLIED SOUTH WITH CONSIDERABLE HARD CURRENCY, THE YAR RIAL. DID CONTAINMENT MEAN CUTTING THESE ECONOMIC PROPS FOR REGIME IN SOUTH? DID IT MEAN REDUCING SOVIET PRESENCE IN NORTH, PARTICULARLY IN MILITARY AND EMBASSY, WHICH BOTH HAD PERSONNEL POSTED EVERYWHERE IN YAR? THIS WAS POLICY OF ISOLATION FOR SOUTH YEMEN. IT REQUIRED CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT IN YAR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS IT SAS IMPLICITLY CHALLENGE TO RADICAL REGIME IN ADEN AND ITS BACKERS. ALTERNATIVE WAS POLICY OF RAPPROCHEMENT, LIKE ONE WHICH HAD BEEN TRIZ BY YAR AND KINGDOM UP TO SEPTEMBER OF LAST YEAR. IT INVOLVED
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SEARCH FOR INCREASED LINKS WITH SOUTH, AND EFFORT TO DIVIDE RADICALS FROM MODERATES OVER PERIOD OF TIME, DIVIDE SALEM FROM ABD ALAFATTAH.

4. WHICH POLICY DID YAR THINK BEST?
BASINDWA SAID POLICY OF RAPPROCHEMENT HADN'T WORKED. SOUTH YEMENIS HAD JUST BEEN "PLAYING" WITH SAUDIS, SAID BASINDWA. BASINDWA REFUSED ALSO TO ENDORSE ISOLATION POLICY, AND IN FACT TURNED DOWN REPEATED SUGGESTIONS TO SPELL OUT HIS OWN VIEWS ON POLICY OVER NEXT YEAR OR SO TOWARD SOUTH. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT MOST IMPORTANT JOB FOR YAR WAS TO PROVIDE "SOCIAL JUSTICE" AND DEVELOPMENT FOR ITS OWN PEOPLE. HE ALSO SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT USG STOOD BEHIND YAR. HE NOTED WITH APPROVAL STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT CARTER ABOUT SOVIET ROLE IN AFRICA AND APPLAUDED US AIRLIFT TO ZAIRE. HE SAID HE DISCERNED IMPORTANT SHIFT IN US TOWARD RESISTANCE TO SOVIETS. PRESIDENT'S ATTEMPT TO REDUCE CONGRESSIONAL RESTRAINTS OF OUR ABILITY TO RUSH MILITARY AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO FRIENDS IN NEED WAS CASE IN POINT. HE UNDERSTOOD WHY USG HAD NOT SUPPORTED SIAD BARRE'S

INVASION OF ETHIOPIA BUT HE KNEW, HE SAID, THAT OUR ATTITUDE TO FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN OIL-RICH PENINSULA -- IN OMAN AND YEMEN SPECIFICALLY -- WOULD BE DIFFERENT.

5. CHARGE REPEATED SUGGESTION THAT POLICY TOWARD SOUTH MIGHT BE SUBJECT FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AFTER FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT IN SANA. HE SAID MAT USG NEEDED TO KNOW WHAT COURSE YAR WISHED TO TAKE. HE SAID THAT UNTIL SANA MADE ITS VIEWS KNOWN IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR REGIONAL STATES TO HELP. BASINDWA SEEMED TO TAKE THE POINT.

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R 280841Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4846
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SANA 2519

COMMENT: OVER LAST SIX MONTHS WE HAVE REPORTED FROM SANA SERIES OF REMARKS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES ABOUT PLANS FOR ARMED ACTION AGAINST SOUTH YEMEN. PERHAPS BASINDWA'S REMARKS MARK SHIFT IN THINKING ON THIS SUBJECT. WE HOPE SO. WE SEE NO RPT NO MILITARY OPTION FOR LOCAL STATES AGAINST PDRY. INVASION OF SOUTH WOULD BE ANOTHER OGADEN. AREA STATES ARE, AT SAME TIME, LACKING ANY COORDINATED OR WELL-DEFINED STRATEGY TOWARD SOUTH. WITH STEPS BEING TAKEN BY USG TO EXPLORE RESUMED RELATIONS WITH PDRY, IT IS GOOD TIME TO TALK THESE MATTERS OUT WITH SAUDIS AND YEMENIS.
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